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The Case for Sex-Positivity: Combating Stigma & Religion

by [Tasha Fierce](#) on October 7, 2010

It's high time we as Black people learn to collectively embrace a sex-positive worldview. What do I mean by sex-positive? [Sex-positivity](#) equals acceptance of differing sexual orientations, acceptance of varying gender identities and presentations, non-marginalization of sex acts that are consensual, and promotion of healthy sexuality. Sounds great, right? Yet too many of us allow fear, religion, and ignorance to get in the way of learning about and practicing sex-positivity.

A sex-positive philosophy could help foster solutions to many of the problems our community is facing today, such as teen pregnancy, STD infection rates, and rampant homophobia, which forces queer folks to stay mum about their orientation. Trying futilely to promote abstinence until marriage or simply ignoring the fact that young people are going to have sex, whether you teach them about safe sex/birth control or not, wouldn't be an issue if sexuality was openly discussed and not stigmatized. An understanding of gender transgression and unpacking of institutionalized transphobia could be achieved. "Alternative" lifestyles, such as BDSM, wouldn't be taboo, but accepted as an expression of healthy sexuality. Folks wouldn't have to wring their hands over who's on the DL because the DL wouldn't be necessary. This isn't some utopian ideal. It's a consequence of removing the barriers to talking frankly about non-heteronormative sexuality and promoting sex-positivity.

One huge obstacle in the path towards the Black community's embrace of sex-positivity is religion. I know we're a very religious bunch, and the main religion of Black Americans is Christianity. Unfortunately, Christianity is not a particularly sex-positive religion. In fact, I'd venture to say Christianity is sex-negative. While some aspects of the sex-positive movement are somewhat supported, mainly polyamory/polygamy on the

part of men, the others, not so much. Personally, I'm a religious refugee, a pastor's granddaughter who attended a Christian school and was raised in the church but now identifies as agnostic. I consider myself spiritual but do not belong to any particular organized religion. In my 10 years of Bible study, I came to understand that the main thing one should take away from Christian teachings is to love one another. You don't have to approve of someone's sexual orientation or gender expression, but you should not condemn it or relegate the discussion of it to the shadows. The Bible teaches that we are all God's children. I recognize that many passages in the Bible can be interpreted to condemn certain sexual practices such as homosexuality. Just remember, however, that during slavery white Americans interpreted passages in the Bible to justify enslaving our people. I don't want to throw shade towards religious people, but I'm going to need to you open your minds and leave the judging to whatever higher power you believe in.

There are so many different ways to express sexuality and so many opportunities to embrace it. Sexuality does not have to be vanilla, as it were, but can be a delicious rainbow sherbet of diversity (OK, I'll stop with the ice cream metaphors). Denying the many ways humans can be sexual beings or love each other cuts us off from our brothers and sisters, who are perfectly deserving of our acceptance and respect. Consider developing a sex-positive mentality. You may find it opens doors for you that you didn't even know were there—and it can be so much fun to explore what's behind them.

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